

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 340 616

SE 052 737

TITLE Nature Museums: Tools for Learning about, Promoting, and Protecting the Natural Heritage of Europe. Proceedings of the Seminar Organised by the Council of Europe in Collaboration with The International Council of Museums (Strasbourg, September 27-29, 1989). Environmental Encounters Series, No. 9.

INSTITUTION Council of Europe, Strasbourg (France).

REPORT NO ISBN-92-871-1822-1-(French); ISBN-92-871-1823-X

PUB DATE 90

NOTE 74p.

PUB TYPE Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.

DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Environmental Education; Foreign Countries; *Museums; Natural Resources; *Public Support

IDENTIFIERS *Environmental Awareness; Europe; *Natural History

ABSTRACT

The history of museology over the last century suggests that, in general, the founding of a new natural history museum is rarely the result of planning within the cultural policy field, a situation contrary to what occurs in the history of art museums. This lack of planning with respect to natural history museums has several causes, particularly in Europe, including: a narrow cultural view of science; a lack of importance being attached to the role of these museums in promoting environmental awareness and proper land-use; and lack of capital investment since natural history museums are most often not tourist attractions. Reported here are the activities surrounding the Seminar on Natural Museums in Strasbourg during September, 1989. The main theme of this seminar was spotlighting the current museological revolution in terms of public accessibility, of techniques to stimulate and connect community action, of the recognition of an expanding social role, about new career opportunities, and about the creation of partnerships with environmental management agencies. Included in this document are: (1) an introduction detailing the rationale and purpose of the seminar; and (2) a summary of the speaker presentations and group discussions outlined by preamble and major themes, sub-themes and discussions, and proposals for follow-up activities including the conclusions and final declarations. Appendices, which make up the bulk of the document, include: a list of seminar participants with contact information; the official seminar program; the draft of recommendations to member common market states on the role of museums in environmental education, information, and training; texts of speeches, presentations, and reports; and photocopies of several reviews from the print media in Europe. (JJK)

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Nature museums:

Tools for learning about,
promoting and protecting
the natural heritage of Europe

Proceedings of the seminar
organised by the Council of Europe
in collaboration with the International Council of Museums
Strasbourg, 27-29 September 1989

French edition:

Les musées de la nature : outils pour la connaissance, la valorisation et la préservation du patrimoine naturel européen

ISBN 92-871-1822-1

Strasbourg, Council of Europe, Publishing and Documentation Service

ISBN 92-871-1823-X

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Printed in France

Nature and Environment Series

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2. Freshwater, 1968 (*out of print*)
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32. European dune and shoreline vegetation, 1985
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36. Development of flora and fauna in urban areas, 1987
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38. The protection of dragonflies (*Odonata*) and their biotopes, 1988
39. Problems of soil conservation, 1988
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42. Saproxylic invertebrates and their conservation, 1989

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8. Colloquy on genetic heritage, the conservation of wild progenitors of cultivated plants, 1990
9. Seminar on nature museums: tools for learning about, promoting and protecting the natural heritage of Europe, 1990

Planning and Management Series

Hedges, 1988

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0504-11/4/90-1-E

NATURE MUSEUMS:

tools for learning about, promoting and protecting
the natural heritage of Europe

Proceedings of the Seminar
organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration
with the International Council of Museums (ICOM)

Strasbourg 27-29 September 1989

Strasbourg 1990

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INTRODUCTION

The Seminar on "Nature museums: tools for learning about, promoting and protecting the natural heritage of Europe" was held from 27 to 29 September 1989 at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. It was organised by the Environment Conservation and Management Division with the assistance of the School Education Division, and in collaboration with the International Council of Museums (ICOM).

The Seminar was intended for museum curators, elected representatives, representatives from the relevant authorities, and for information, education and communication specialists working in museums, visitor centres in protected areas and other similar structures. The aim was:

- to demonstrate the great variety of activities carried out by museums and similar structures and to alert the public to the importance of the natural heritage in Europe. Particularly striking examples were taken to show how modern communication techniques could be used to reach sectors of the community;
- to take stock of experiments involving co-operation and exchanges with partner-agencies at both national and European level and consider whether these should be developed to form a network;
- to identify partnerships which would bring museums closer to the public;

The targeted museums were:

- traditional urban museums (natural history or zoological museums ...) and botanical gardens;
- rural museums (open-air museums, folk museums, etc ...),
- parks and reserves;
- other recreational and educational facilities with similar objectives.

For three days some 80 specialists considered the following themes:

- the museological revolution and making museums more accessible to the outside world,
- recognition of the social role of museums,
- partner agencies,
- the techniques of the museological revolution,
- a new job: museum manager,
- a new museum: choice between removing, renovating or rebuilding,

The first day of the Seminar was given over to an excursion, and the following two days to presentations and discussion in plenary session of the various themes and sub-themes.

Another highlight of the Seminar was the visit to the zoological museum run by the Louis Pasteur University and the Municipality of Strasbourg and to the Botanical Garden in Strasbourg.

EXCURSION

The Seminar began on 27 September with an excursion to the Northern Vosges Regional Nature Park and the Bad Dürkheim Natural History Museum. The links established between this "territory" and this "structure" provide an example of transfrontier co-operation in nature conservation.

The museum manages the Palatinate Nature Park and collaborates with the Northern Vosges Park by means of exhibitions, study visits for French and German teachers, and pupil exchanges. For its part, the Northern Vosges Park was designated a "Biosphere Reserve" in the "Man and Biosphere" programme. The Palatinate Nature Park, is applying for this status too, the aim being to establish a single biosphere reserve covering two frontier parks.

This visit was also useful in demonstrating the complementary nature of museums and parks. Parks are genuine living museums and have acquired infrastructures which allow them to play a remarkably effective part in providing environmental information and education. Protected areas are an extension of museums, promoting live observation and understanding of various phenomena, and of the relations between man and his natural environment.

The Regional Nature Park has various educational facilities for presenting and promoting the natural and cultural heritage. Participants at the Seminar thus visited:

- the wildlife centre at Neuwiller-les-Saverne, designed for schoolchildren;
- the botanical and forest path at Hanau pond, which illustrates the slow development of a peat bog;
- the forest centre which houses a permanent exhibition covering all the forest's functions and characteristics: historical, economic, ecological, and sociological.

Second part of the excursion: the Palatinate Natural Science Museum (POLLICHIA-MUSEUM) at Bad Dürkheim.

The museum is located in the old "ducal mill" in a fine parkland sitting. It has a surface area of 1,400 m² and possesses interesting animal, mineral and plant collections.

After the official speeches, participants were taken by MM Gettmann and van Gyseghem, to look at the collections of butterflies, coleoptera, hymenoptera, European birds, fish, molluscs and crustaceans, precious stones and minerals ... as well as a room devoted to polar exploration.

The Palatinate Forest Nature Park's Information and Research Centre is attached to the museum, which also runs an amateur film festival on biological subjects, and is developing a remarkable educational programme.

The Environment Conservation and Management Division wishes to express its grateful thanks to the people, organisations and local authorities who helped to organise this excursion.

Particular thanks are due to:

Mr Bernard ROCH, Director of the Vosges Regional Nature Park
Mr Jean-Claude GENOT, Nature Conservation Officer, who gave an introductory talk on the Park and its facilities for observing the natural environment

Mr Jean WESTPHAL, President of the park, who very kindly provided a splendid lunch

Mr Wolfgang W GETTMANN, Director of the Bad Dürkheim Museum, for his welcome and very generous hospitality

Dr. W LUDWIG (Bezirksverband/Trägerverein Naturpark Pfälzertal)
Bürgermeister Georg KALBFUSS (Stadt Bad Dürkheim)

Professor Dr. Walter CAPPEL (POLLICHIA)

R VAN GYSEGHEM (Dipl - Biol.)

Dr. V JOHN

Dr. D. SCHWEISS

OFFICIAL OPENING

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS AND RESUME OF DISCUSSIONS

In his opening speech, Mr F ALBANESE, Director of Environment and Local Authorities at the Council of Europe, welcomed the participants. He expressed pleasure at the very positive response to the Seminar, indicated by the large number of participants. The Seminar coincided with a period of profound change in nature museums after many years of leading an inward-looking, isolated existence. Museums were now making every effort to play a full part in the cultural and scientific life of the city. Their role in information and education was particularly important in a world increasingly concerned about damage to the environment. In conclusion, Mr Albanese hoped that the Seminar would help to strengthen co-operation between the directors of museums and other similar structures.

Next, in his capacity as Chairman, Professor Jean DORST introduced the Seminar.

The General Rapporteur, Mr Jullien, representing ICOM, passed on to participants good wishes for the success of the Seminar from Mr ALPHA OUMAR KONARE, Chairman of ICOM.

The following summary of the speeches and discussions was prepared by Mr Jullien, the General Rapporteur, whose report is divided into three parts:

1. preamble and major themes;
2. sub-themes and discussion;
3. proposals for possible follow-up activities to the seminar, initiated by the Environment Conservation and Management Division of the Council of Europe.

This type of commentary must inevitably be brief. Readers requiring additional information are referred to Appendix IV which reproduces in full the texts of the reports, and to document PE-SEM/MU (90) 1 which gives a summary of the various presentations and speeches.

1. Preamble and major themes

Introducing this seminar on nature museums and their role in learning about, promoting and protecting the natural heritage of Europe, Professor J DORST began with a reminder of the three basic functions of these museums, which were closely interlinked and interdependent: managing and protecting a heritage which is an irreplaceable aspect of the earth and of life; conducting research on this heritage, or themes connected with it and finally using the heritage in museums for the public's education and enjoyment. The seminar was largely concerned with the last - and most eminently social - of these three tasks. It was particularly important today in view of the new problems facing the natural world, and the consequent need for information (PE-SEM/MU (89) 7).

In introducing the first theme - the museological revolution and making museums more accessible to the outside world - Mr C Hill described the changing social role of museum, from the Renaissance, when they were the show-pieces of aristocratic houses, to modern times where in addition to their collecting and research activities, they had developed an important informational function. He set out to show what had led to the real turning point in the development of European museums after the war: the realisation that it was important to find out whether museums were still offering the public what it wanted; whether there was still some sort of communication between the two. This was a concern which had not manifested itself noticeably since the founding of many museums in the 19th century. It was therefore reasonable to suspect that there was a growing gap between the museums inherited from the 19th century - still very typical of their times in their approach to the public - and the society they supposedly represented and catered for, which had developed rapidly in the 20th century.

Research had proved that these fears were justified, and had helped to bring about a change of direction in museum strategy. North American assessment techniques - unsurprisingly, the product of

a market economy country - had been used to bring supply and demand back into line. This had plainly required an effort of adjustment which had considerably changed the face of museums. Now to some extent a major source of information in an age when technological progress had flooded the communications market with new technologies, they had had to open their doors to professions which had previously been very little represented, if at all. The Natural History Museum in London, for example, had come a long way since the days when the scientific community ruled supreme. Nowadays, ideas men, designers, stage designers, information panel writers, computer experts, and even businessmen were all contributing their know-how to the common effort. Finally, consultation with other establishments allowed museums to collect ideas and initiate projects on a very large scale, sometimes extending beyond the national context (PE-SEM/MU (89) 1).

Introducing the second theme: "recognition of the social role of museums", K HUDSON explored the social impact of museums. Speaking of the cultural environment which they create around visitors, he showed the extent to which museums fulfilled the important role of changing attitudes. From being an elitist and even private phenomenon, they had become a prime mover in social change. The example of the Goulandris Natural History Museum in Athens illustrated this particularly well. On this level, museums were clearly essential partners for anyone working in the community to give the consistency and momentum it needed for harmonious development (PE-SEM/MU (89) 2).

Partner agencies - the subject of the 3rd theme - were the province of K W PETERSEN. The chief of these were other museums with which information and equipment was exchanged, the educational system, which museums served by disseminating information of which they were now practically the only repositories (in systematics for example), environmental management agencies, for the reason given above, decision-makers in key sectors of industry and agriculture, whom museums could influence in a positive sense because of their reputation for impartiality and rigorous research, public authorities, voluntary associations which were full of ideas and energy, and finally the media, which helped to put across the basic message of all nature museums: Man is part of nature; destroy nature and you destroy man (PE-SEM/MU (89) 3).

H TREFF, introducing theme 4 - **The techniques of the museological revolution** - offered a different viewpoint. Instead of looking at museums globally, from the outside, and tracing the highly instructive development of their community role, he went backstage to see how they prepared internally to meet public expectations. He showed how they used all the techniques of museum presentation to draw visitors into exhibitions, stimulate their taste for discovery and games, make connections with everyday characters or situations, and generally link the museum with ordinary life on both basic and topical issues (PE-SEM/MU (89) 4).

Introducing theme 5 - **A new job: museum manager** - and referring to what the previous speakers had said, A FAYARD showed how different the job of museum curator was today compared to a mere 20 years ago. In fact it was almost a new job - to such an extent had activities involving the public taken over - although everything to do with the collections was still the curator's responsibility. A FAYARD had daily experience of this new role since, after a long period of preparation, he was currently directing renovation of the Grenoble

museum, which had become a cultural priority in the town. FAYARD drew the attention of local or state officials, responsible for the museum sector to that change, the reasons for which we considered above. Clearly, these changes were inevitable if museums were to meet their new social commitments; but museums must also be provided with highly qualified staff in essential sectors, who could consider a museum career only if that career were on a level with the new museum's ambitions. This meant that the new museum's organisation chart must be carefully reviewed and corrected, enabling it to take up its new role in contemporary society prestigiously, competently and effectively (PE-SEM/MU (89) 5).

Taking up this last major theme, G. PINNA tackled what is often a thorny question for museums, now that nature is one again in the headlines. Should a new museum ... relocate, renovate or rebuild?

After looking at the reasons for the often complicated current situation in this hitherto neglected area of culture, G. PINNA unhesitatingly declared: "We must renovate old institutions, providing them with financial and human resources and enabling them to perform a museum's three fundamental tasks - research, conservation of the heritage and cultural dissemination." Finally, he agreed with other speakers that there must be co-operation between museums, co-operation which he saw as entirely decentralised, allowing them to progress strongly, consistently and freely in areas for which all nature museums were responsible (PE-SEM/MU (89) 6).

2. Sub-themes and discussions

These did much to develop and enrich the message of the major themes.

Theme I: **The museological revolution and making museums more accessible to the outside world**

During discussion of the sub-themes mention was made of the importance of collections in such unlikely fields as higher research into mercury pollution; numerous examples were also given of ways in which museums could become externally active: games, land or sea excursions, meetings, programme proposals, etc. Particularly illuminating contributions were made by K ENGSTROM, Sweden, G JONKMAN, Netherlands, N MEMOIRE, France, J C BARROIS, France, and A QUINTART, Belgium.

In the ensuing discussions three further subjects were tackled:

- youth activities, often very worth-while in terms of the role subsequently played by young people in environmental protection groups (discussion led by E LANG, Curator of the Strasbourg Zoological Museum);
- the arguments for and against the use of stuffed animals in museum displays (discussion led by D GRANDJEAN, Director of the Mercantour National Park);
- the excessive tourist pressure which badly-timed publicity could bring to bear on sensitive areas of the biosphere (discussion led by F ELLENBROEK, Curator of the TILBURG Museum, Holland).

Theme II: **Recognition of the social role of museums**

Much was said about this factor which might be recalled the museum environment and which seemed essential to any genuinely effective museum activity. Much was also said about the type of message museums convey: directive? non-directive? In any case, everyone agreed that they must be objective and circumspect like any organisation with major informational responsibilities.

The final point was the important role of ecomuseums in rural areas where they served as a living reminder of man's relationship to nature, and helped to maintain local activities and populations. Contributions on the sub-themes were made by: O RIVAL and J L OBEREINER, France; W KORNET, Netherlands; J CORREIA DA CUNHA, Portugal; and F ELLENBROEK, Netherlands. The following took part in the subsequent discussion: Mr JACQUAT (Switzerland), H TREFF (Federal Republic of Germany), G PUSTELNIK (France), K HUDSON (Great Britain), J DORST (France) and J P RIBAUT (Council of Europe).

Theme III: Partner agencies

In the discussion of the sub-themes, R CLAIR (PARIS-Villette) said that she could link a museum network of the kind which seemed to be emerging in Strasbourg, with her schools-museums project on Villette.

B HEITZ, Director of the Botanical Garden in Strasbourg, gave a detailed account of the relationship between the garden and its "friends". The overall picture was positive: there was help with the funding of projects, there was a volunteer section, and public relations were good.

Finally, Mr G MAC GREGOR REID from the Horniman Museum (LONDON) gave a very interesting account of co-operation between European and African organisations on the management of Lake Victoria in East Africa, where the ill-considered introduction of non-native fish was disrupting the ecological chain both in the lake and outside. Museums could play important role in co-operative schemes of this kind.

During the discussion which followed, the main topic was possible international co-operation on information and travelling exhibitions. The important role already played by ICOM in this field was pointed out by various ICOM members. Interesting examples of co-operation between museums in the same country were given (USA, K HUDSON: rotating membership of a consortium,) etc.

Theme IV: The techniques of the museological revolution

The sub-themes covered the various concepts of museum-based and outside exhibitions with contributions by W GETTMAN of BAD DÜRKHEIM, F ZAPATA SALGADO of the DOÑANA Park (SPAIN) and M JOANNY, of the Camargue Regional Park.

Theme V: A new job: museum manager

Only one sub-theme, presented by Mr A QUINTART of BRUSSELS, followed the theme introduced by A FAYARD.

After Mr PINNA'S contribution (still on Theme V), B MEIDELL from Norway spoke about the problems the expanding role of museums posed for the universities. The following also discussed the museum's new role: C WYLER, Administrator of the Geneva museum, and P RIGAUT, representing the municipality and ecomuseum of FOURMIES, France. Finally Mrs GALANGAU spoke about the projected evolution section in the Paris museum, which would also bring the museum closer to a mass public.

3. Proposals for follow-up action on the seminar

Having summed up, the Rapporteur discussed some ideas for follow-up activities.

1. **Make the authorities in the member countries aware of:**

- the particular importance which nature museums and similar structures were acquiring in today's world where the public, alerted by the media to environmental problems, were increasingly expecting them to intervene on basic (volcanoes, genetics etc) and topical (pollution, acid rain, etc) issues;
 - the still all-too-frequent gap between what was required of these structures and what they were actually capable of providing, given an organisational structure designed for a different social set-up and which needed adapting to contemporary needs. They must be able to use their specialised knowledge and the unique heritage for which they were responsible to meet all the expectations of a society increasingly concerned by damage to its environment, and the future of the planet.
2. **Ask the Council of Europe**, which had initiated and organised this important meeting for the development and dissemination of ideas, to continue its efforts in this field, since the need to exchange information and to co-operate at European level had repeatedly been stressed in the last few days.

VISIT TO THE ZOOLOGICAL MUSEUM

The zoological museum of the Louis Pasteur University and the Municipality of Strasbourg is the only museum in France run jointly by a university and a town. It is a living museum, a museum for all, taking "amuse and inform" as its motto. Setting out to broaden horizons, inform and entertain, it operates by:

- displaying a wide collection of birds, insects, crocodiles, tortoises ... and of dioramas showing landscapes of the world as well as natural environments in Alsace in need of protection: the Rhine forest, the Ried, the upper Vosges;
- mounting temporary exhibitions on various themes;
- operating a nature library of books, audio-visual material and environment-based games;
- running "Nature and environment" clubs for 10 to 15 year olds.

The museum houses several nature or science associations.

The participants watched a dramatic presentation based on an exhibition, "The Scientific Revolution", mounted for the bicentenary of the French revolution. Around 40 exhibits chosen to illustrate the work of scientists at the time of the revolution, an actor staged an

entertainment explaining various inventions which had revolutionised daily life (the metric system, household bleach, the electric battery).

VISIT TO THE BOTANICAL GARDEN

The Botanical Garden constitutes a living museum, covering 3.5 hectares in the very centre of town. It belongs to the Louis Pasteur University, and includes,

- a tropical glasshouse on two levels, with a display collection of palm trees, banana trees ... There is also an artificial rock with various cycads at its summit, bromeliads on its south and ferns on its north side;
- an unheated glasshouse, covering 207 m² and providing winter protection for more than 500 species of plants from Mediterranean-type climates: conifers from the southern hemisphere, bulbous plants. Some of the garden's insect-eating plants are also to be found here. There is also a room containing more than 500 cacti and succulents;
- the outdoor area includes an "Arboretum: of some 1200 trees and shrubs from all the temperate zones. The most striking trees are the Caucasian walnut, the giant Sequoia from the Californian mountains, and the five bald cypresses, one of which - *Taxodium ascendens* - is very rare in Europe.

The herbaceous plants are classed in families to form a sort of plant family tree.

Part of the garden is given over to experimental research beds.

The Environment Conservation and Management Division would like to address its warmest thanks to Mrs Elisabeth LANG, curator of the zoological museum, and her staff who kindly welcomed the participants and took them round the museum. Thanks are also due to Mr Bernard HEITZ, Director of the botanical garden, who enthusiastically arranged a guided tour.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE SEMINAR

At the end of the seminar, the participants adopted a final declaration requesting that:

- the governments of member countries, local and regional authorities, universities and other associations actively support the new initiatives currently being taken by various types of museum to help increase public environmental awareness;
- the Council of Europe take a leading role in setting up a network for the exchange of information and research findings, involving for example:
 - . mounting permanent or travelling exhibitions;
 - . providing schoolchildren and adults with environmental training;

- . computerising data;
- . museum techniques;
- colloquies similar to the one in September 1989 be organised regularly, and co-operation with Eastern European and African countries developed.

They gave the Secretariat the task of incorporating the conclusions in a draft recommendation to be sent to the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE). After examining the text, the CDPE submitted the text in Appendix III to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.

SYMPOSIUM ON EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN MUSEUMS

Mrs Giulia PODESTA LE POITTEVIN, Head of School Education Division, told the participants that a symposium on "Museums and the European heritage - treasure or tool" would take place in Salzburg in September 1990, as part of the work of the Council for Cultural Co-operation (CCC). She particularly stressed that all museums complemented one another and needed to be brought together in a network. The text of her statement appears in Appendix IV.

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General presentation of the theme by:
Mr K HUDSON, Director of the European
Museum of the Year Award, BATH

Presentation of papers and case studies by
different speakers

2.45 to 3.30 pm: Discussion - Break - Synthesis

3.30 to 4.30 pm: **Partner agencies**
- case studies of experiments involving
co-operation and exchange between
museums and partner agencies at both
national and European level: museums,
universities, institutes, schools,
associations, the media, business and
industry, parks, local population,
voluntary bodies.

General presentation of the theme by:
Mr K W PETERSEN, Zoologisk Museum,
KØBENHAVN

Presentation of papers and case studies by
different speakers

4.30 to 5.30 pm: Discussion - Break - Synthesis

6.00 pm: Visit to the Zoological Museum of
Strasbourg

Friday 29 September 1989

9.00 to 10.00 am: **The techniques of the museological
revolution**
- target publics
- techniques and museographical facilities
- techniques of conservating
- techniques of promoting and advertising

General presentation of the theme by:
Mr H A TREFF, Naturkundliches
Bildungszentrum, MÜNCHEN

Presentation of papers and case studies by
different speakers

10.00 to 11.00 am: Discussion - Break - Synthesis

11.00 to 12.00: **A new job: museum manager - from
traditional curator to director of present
day museum**

General presentation of the theme by:
Mr A FAYARD, Muséum d'Histoire naturelle,
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**A new museum: choice between removing,
renovating or rebuilding**

General presentation of the theme by:
Mr G PINNA, Museo civico di storia
naturale, MILANO
Presentation of papers and case studies by
different speakers

12.00 to 12.45 pm: Discussion - Break - Synthesis

12.45 pm: Lunch

3.00 pm: **Closing session**

General summary by:
Mr JULLIEN, Secretary of the ICOM
International Committee for Natural History
Museums

Discussion and adoption of a final
declaration

4.00 pm: End of seminar.

A P P E N D I X I I I

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION

RECOMMENDATION ... OF THE COMMITTEE OF MINISTERS TO MEMBER STATES ON THE ROLE OF MUSEUMS IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, INFORMATION AND TRAINING

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Referring to the conclusions of the seminar on nature museums: "tools for learning about, promoting and protecting the natural heritage of Europe", held in Strasbourg as part of the 1989 intergovernmental programme of activities in collaboration with the International Council of Museums (ICOM);

Reaffirming the importance it attaches to information, training and education activities relating to the environment in the interests of better understanding of major environmental problems by Europeans;

Having regard to the speed of developments in the interpretation of the environment and the constantly growing need for knowledge about the natural heritage, while bearing in mind that museums are a particularly appropriate tool for transmitting knowledge;

Considering that museums should be provided with the necessary means for performing their fundamental functions, ie:

- i. acting as conservatories of fauna, flora, rocks, minerals and fossils, hence as data banks for extinct, disappearing or "viable" species;
- ii. considering scientific research on these reference collections, which constitute the archives of life and the earth and contribute to a study of the evolution of living creatures;
- iii. providing education and disseminating knowledge;

Stressing the complementary nature of natural history museums, ecomuseums, open-air museums and similar structures (botanical gardens, parks and reserves) whose purpose is to demonstrate the natural environment and explain relationships between man, nature and culture;

Bearing in mind that certain museums, in addition to performing their traditional functions, contribute to the economic vitality of the regions in which they are situated;

Mindful that the various types of museum should be regarded alike as serving scientific, cultural and educational purposes;

Noting that the field of concern of museums is expanding to cover more fully the social aspects of environment protection and management;

Aware of the changes occurring in the role of museum curators, who are no longer just scientists but are now the directors of multi-faceted institutions which, in order to be able to contribute to the cultural enhancement of the community, must be managed like businesses;

Aware of the isolation of certain provincial museums and of the need to establish liaison and conduct exchanges of information between the museums of member states on the one hand and museums in Eastern Europe and Africa on the other;

Aware of the need to intensify partnership relations with firms, associations, schools, universities, the media and local authorities;

Having noted the conclusions of the seminar on nature museums

RECOMMENDS THAT THE GOVERNMENTS OF MEMBER STATES

- I. actively support the efforts being made by the various types of museum to promote public awareness of the need to conserve the natural heritage common to all Europeans by encouraging the following measures:
 - i. developing, with the help of the relevant Council of Europe bodies the exchange of information and experience on inter alia:
 - . the organisation of permanent or travelling exhibitions;
 - . the environmental training of schoolchildren and adults;
 - . data automation;
 - . museographic techniques;
 - . loans of material;
 - . relations with administrative, scientific, cultural and financial partners;
 - . inter-museum classes;
 - ii. strengthening links between various types of museum by organising twinning arrangements,
 - iii. periodically organising, in co-operation with the countries of Eastern Europe and Africa, colloquies similar to the one held in September 1989,
 - iv. providing the necessary funding for information and awareness campaigns commensurate with the expectations of a society increasingly concerned by assaults on its environment;

- v. giving high priority in school curricula to the use of extramural educational resources, such as museums and parks,
 - vi. instituting a postgraduate diploma in museology;
- II. study the possibility of establishing, in collaboration with ICOM, a European federation of natural history and related museums in keeping with the cultural role of the Council of Europe;
- III. transmit to regional and local authorities as well as universities and associations working for the natural environment, the text of this Recommendation and to encourage the application by them of the principles mentioned therein.

A P P E N D I X I V

TEXTS OF THE SPEECHES AND REPORTS

OPENING SPEECH AT THE SEMINAR ON NATURE MUSEUMS

BY

Mr F ALBANESE

Director of Environment and Local Authorities at the
Council of Europe

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you on behalf of the Secretary General, Mrs Catherine Lalumière, to a meeting as important and well-attended as this one.

This seminar's success has outstripped even our most optimistic hopes, since the maximum number of participants has been raised from 60 to 100 and we have even had to turn away some of those who wanted to attend.

This success shows how topical your selected theme is, and it also underlines the importance of that exchange of ideas and pooling of experience which you will be engaging in in the next two days.

I know that your work has in fact already begun, since you devoted yesterday to a field excursion which illustrated, among other things, the importance of transfrontier co-operation. I should like to say again how sincerely grateful we are to the authorities of the Northern Vosges Nature Park, particularly Mr Roch, and the Bad Dürkheim Museum, particularly Mr Gettmann, for the warmth and generosity of their welcome.

Museums, nearly all museums, are today undergoing a major change. Once temples for research (often meaningless to the general public) and showcases for unchanging and dusty exhibitions, they are now radically shifting their sights, opening themselves to the public, rejuvenating themselves ... and in short coming to life.

Obviously, museums still undertake research and serve as repositories of scientific collections, and these functions must continue - that is essential. But it is good to see that they have also discovered that they have important work to do in the field of information and education, where they help to sensitise and educate public opinion concerning preservation of the natural heritage.

But to reach the unconverted, the non-specialists, museums must learn to please those groups as well, and must use the latest communication techniques to make them feel that they, too, are involved and have responsibilities which they must discharge.

It would be a mistake to assume that museums should aim primarily at schoolchildren. Education of the young must, of course, take priority, but it is highly desirable that specific initiatives should also be taken for adults by conventional museums, open air museums and park information centres.

Museums have an important part to play in the life of cities. In this context, their relations with local and regional authorities, universities, and associations and other movements concerned with protection and study of the environment are vital. Museums are in fact becoming a major source of knowledge, culture, and indeed pleasure and satisfaction in our leisure society.

These outside relations and this openness towards other institutions and the whole community will also help to promote and develop that system of patronage and sponsorship which is already so important in other areas and in certain countries.

These, ladies and gentlemen, are a few of the ideas which your seminar's theme brings to mind. I very much hope that the many ideas which you yourselves will be exchanging will help to reinforce your work - and perhaps lead you to devise new forms of co-operation.

I shall say no more. I thank you for your attention and am sure that your work will be immensely successful.

Introductory address by

Mr J DORST
Muséum national d'Histoire Naturelle
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First and foremost, we must thank the Council of Europe for organising this seminar on nature museums and their place in conservation, scientific research and the spread of knowledge in the natural sciences. Their role is particularly important at a time when we are actively concerned with our natural heritage, with how to preserve it, and how to put it to proper and sensible use.

Natural history museums, like those devoted to art, prehistory or archaeology, have for too long been seen as static, dust-infested institutions, full of "mummies", minerals, plants and stuffed animals - collections of curios from the past. Now other approaches to nature are available to scientists and the general public alike, for example film, television, nature visits, and trips to far-off lands, which are becoming steadily more accessible and affordable.

Nevertheless, the general public still clings to its notion of the conventional museum, where stuffed animals, mammals and birds have pride of place, along with insects and creatures from the ocean depths. My own experience confirms this. Some years ago, the "Muséum de Paris" put on an exhibition entitled "Nature 10,000", bringing together a wonderful collection of photographs taken with the help of the electron microscope. New at the time, this technique revealed previously unknown living structures. A book was provided for visitors' comments. "The photos are excellent", many would write, "but when are you going to show us real, stuffed animals?" That is what the public wants, whether they have a committed amateur interest and are looking for material to assist them in their own conservation efforts or are simply curious. Children are a particularly good "target". Just as in art museums, they like to have direct contact with real objects. Coming back to the true function of nature museums, however, they do three things.

Their first job is to conserve - to keep the earth itself and life on file. They are in fact veritable data banks. Collections of plants, insects, marine animals, reptiles, mammals, and birds, whether existant or in fossil form, constitute a heritage that can never be replaced. Material of this kind is particularly precious and we have plenty of it in this old Europe of ours, because our museums date back such a long way. Many of them house species which are already extinct or well on the way to becoming so. They all enable research to be carried out on the systematics and evolution of life forms. Cell and molecular biology have made enormous progress, which is to be applauded. But we must also accord systematic biology, which covers the major biological systems, to the place it deserves. That can only be done by studying the real evidence of evolution - the very evidence which our nature museums contain.

The second function of nature museums is directly linked to their conservation role, and has just been mentioned. Throughout the world, there are still several million plant and animal species to be discovered, described and named. Where else can this be done except in our museums, where new forms can be compared with known ones and classified in such a way as to provide a better approach to the major problem of the life sciences, the problem of evolution.

The third function of our nature museums concerns education and the spread of knowledge among the different sectors of the general public. It is here that, far from than being cold, static conservatories, museums have, thanks to recent changes, become places of active communication. They have become a vital meeting place - a source of attractively presented information on the problems of present-day biology. With the help of constantly changing displays and temporary exhibitions on topical themes, they play a vital role in spreading knowledge, treading heard on the heels of the latest scientific discoveries and theories.

Nature museums are thus a very natural part of a city's or a country's cultural life. Even recently, certain idle talkers have wondered whether science is a part of culture. The answer is plainly yes, particularly at a time when all the sciences and scientific disciplines are prodigiously expanding our understanding of the inert and the living world. This latter point is one I would insist on. We are finding out more and more about the workings of living matter down to its minutest, molecular structures. We also know, although our knowledge is still far from complete, how living beings group themselves into balanced communities, even if the balance remains unstable. Indeed, this dynamic process is the primary condition of life's continuing on earth.

Another basic biological notion, the diversity of living beings, needs to be brought home to everyone. Every individual differs from his fellows, even if he belongs to the same species, race and community, and the genes have closely intermingled. Geneticists and immunologists have demonstrated this clearly.

This diversity is just as striking, however, in the case of whole species and large communities of living creatures, settlements and ecosystems. Why, for example, are there several hundred different coleoptera, those insects which play such an important role in biotic communities? There are probably 5 or 10 times more of them. Survival of the human race depends on maintaining this diversity.

I come now to the last point, which I would like to deal with briefly, namely the relationship between man and his environment. There are specialised museums, ecomuseums, which focus on this relationship, but all nature museums should cover it with the help of permanent or temporary exhibitions. At a time when the conservation of nature and renewable natural resources is a matter of immediate concern, we would be failing in our duty if we did not stress this essential element of contemporary biology. The public expects this, and we must meet its expectations. For it is here that nature museums can, and must, make a dynamic contribution to the vast campaign for the protection of nature and natural resources, one of today's political and economic priorities.

This is particularly the case in this old Europe of ours - old and yet forever young. Because we have our museums, and because those museums are old, we have fantastic resources - collections painstakingly accumulated over the centuries, and also the knowledge and experience of expert naturalists. Our museums all complement one another to a remarkable degree, and they also work closely together. It is up to us to build up a solid and close-knit network. Museum curators are no longer mere "storekeepers", watching our collections of plants and stuffed animals in promiscuous confusion - their task is now to celebrate life itself. I am sure that this will form part of the message of this European seminar, over and above all our personal opinions. It concerns the future of each and every one of us.

The museological revolution: making museums more accessible to
the outside world

by

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First I would like to thank the Environment Conservation and Management Division of the Council of Europe for inviting me to take part in this seminar and for the great honour of asking me to be the first speaker. In this introductory session I have to set the scene for those following me and in doing so I hope that museum colleagues in the audience will forgive me if I offer a condensed history of museums and their evolution for the benefit of those here who do not know a great deal about these strange institutions. Because this meeting is concerned with the natural environment I will, of course, devote most of what I have to say to natural history museums.

I am told that 1989 has some significance as an anniversary of a revolution and I note that my theme refers to the museological revolution. But museums have undergone evolution rather than revolution; some have not changed at all.

We might even ask the question: is the natural history museum an endangered species? How, in the 20th century, can we remould an institution whose character was formed in the 19th century or even earlier? Is it, to use a metaphor much loved by politicians and journalists critical of outdated institutions, a dinosaur unable to adapt to the economic, social and technological changes affecting all our lives?

In order to assess the present state of natural history museums I want to look briefly at their origins in order to identify the changes which have taken place both in their own perceived functions and in public attitudes towards them. What I have to say is based mainly on my acquaintance with museums in the United Kingdom and particularly on developments at the Natural History Museum in London where I work. I hope that you will accept that when I am talking about museums generally I am referring to Europe as a whole. But I would like to emphasise that as a member of ICOM and a participant in many of its conferences I have been privileged to meet colleagues from other European museums to learn of developments elsewhere.

The origins of museums in the royal, ducal and other private collections of Renaissance Europe have been well-documented for example in the published proceedings of a seminar held in Oxford in 1983 to commemorate the tercentenary of the Ashmolean Museum. Examples are the collections of the Medici in Florence, Calceolari in Verona, the Habsburgs in Vienna and so on. In the main these collections consisted of paintings, fine metalwork, enamels, gemstones and manuscripts; they were largely advertisements for princely wealth and taste. But these collections often included natural objects because of the beauty, rarity or because their intricate forms were seen to rival the work of the craftsman.

Collections of natural objects also fulfilled Francis Bacon's dictum that a learned gentleman should create in his cabinet, his "cabinet de curiosités", his "wunderkammer", a microcosm of the wider world.

When the physical and intellectual horizons of Europe expanded through contact with the New world and other parts of the globe expeditions returned with exotic fauna and flora to enrich cabinets and botanic gardens throughout Europe: for the first time Europeans saw armadillos from South America and birds of paradise from the East Indies. The effect on European vision is conveyed in this painting of the mid-17th century by de Critz which portrays John Tradescant and friend. Note that half of the picture space is dominated by shells, objects of great beauty, value and rarity - and eminently collectable. The Tradescant collections were eventually acquired by Elias Ashmole to form the Ashmolean Museum opened in 1683 as the first public museum in Britain.

In this same year a certain Hans Sloane, a protestant Ulsterman of Scottish descent was travelling down to Orange after attending botanical lectures at the Jardin du roi in Paris. The university of Orange was the only one in France where a protestant could take a medical degree and after successfully qualifying Sloane completed his tour de France via Montpellier, Toulouse and Bordeaux. By the time of his death in 1753 Sloane had amassed one of the largest private libraries and collections of his time. He was anxious that it should pass to the nation and not be dispersed. As you know, after much debate, Sloane's collections were acquired for the nation as one of the foundation collections of the British Museum. The plants he collected, many of them from Jamaica, form the Sloane Herbarium, now in the Natural History Museum, London.

This example is just one of many national institutions whose origins reflect a universal curiosity about the natural world and its eventual expression in the museums we know in the Europe of today. The Act which established the British Museum in 1753 stated clearly that the institution was "not only for the learned and curious but for the general use and benefit of the public". Here in this one statement we find a pointer to the ambivalence with which museums have regarded their functions ever since: are they research centres or educational institutions? Most Directors would answer unequivocally that natural history museums combine both functions. The relative emphasis placed on these functions varies widely; the problems come when decisions have to be made about resource allocation, bearing in mind that ideas about "research" and "education" have undergone their own evolution since the 18th century. We shall look first at "education". We have seen that the early precursors of the great public museums were essentially private collections for the delectation of the few; classification if it existed was rudimentary. To the curators of the 19th century museums "education" meant permitting the public to gaze upon the collections or part of the collections behind glass. Popular interest in natural history was not, of course new. In Britain there has been a strong tradition of the amateur naturalist since the 18th century. In France an extraordinary number of 18th century natural history collections in Paris and the provinces has been documented. Le Spectacle de la nature (1732) by the Abbe Pluche and Buffon's monumental

Histoire naturelle (1749-1804) enjoyed tremendous popularity, and were, it seems, more in demand than the works of Voltaire. The advent of the Linnean system provided a more rational basis for the transition from cabinet of curiosities to scientific collection.

In spite of its size the Natural History in London serves as an archetype for a national museum of natural history situated in a large city. In 1878 an act of parliament finally gave the go-ahead to separate the natural history collections from all the others in the British Museum at Bloomsbury and move them to a new building at South Kensington which opened in 1881. The public spaces in the museum were, and still are, dominated by the architecture. In contemporary terms all that was needed for the display of the collections were long galleries filled with glass cases with the contents arranged according to current ideas of classification.

The concept of the cabinet de curiosités of the 17th and 18th centuries evidently survived unchanged into the 19th century and even into the 20th century. Throughout Europe natural history museums presented the same face to the public. Why was this so? The simple answer would be "curator-controlled communication".

It was the zoologists, the palaeontologists, the entomologists who specified the contents of the public galleries. This was the situation at the Natural History Museum until well into the 1960s. Something had to change. After all no-one had carried out much research to find out what the expectations of our visitors were and why they came to the museum so we had to find out more about them. But, above all we had to take account of other communications media and their pervasive influence. We have to acknowledge the power of television and the large audiences for the many excellent natural programmes but at the same time there is ominous talk of a "three minute" culture, the recognition of the average person's limited attention span when confronted by the electronic media. This puts a severe strain on television's ability to present abstract ideas and debate. High quality colour printing produces an incredible range of books and magazines covering every aspect of the environment. Who wants to go to a natural history museum for information? The words "ecology" and "environment", with their vital emphasis on biological inter-relationships, are now firmly implanted in the public mind. So, again, how should museums respond?

In 1975 the new public services department at the Natural History was set up to transform the essentially 19th century galleries into exhibition spaces more appropriate to the 20th century. Since 1977 we have produced eight new-style exhibitions covering 20,000 m². The exhibitions are thematic and they invite interaction in the strict sense of the word. We hoped from the start that visitors would enjoy a sense of participation and there was no reason why our exhibitions should not at the same time communicate effectively. We certainly made mistakes in the early days but, building on the North American experience and methods of evaluation, we have since learned a great deal about visitor behaviour and its implications for exhibition design. All this has been published in a number of papers by Roger Miles and other colleagues in the department. We have moved a long way from "curator-controlled communication". The great majority of our visitors do not have any biological qualification, neither are

they readers of the New Scientist. Yet if, through the medium of the exhibition, we can implant some key ideas about evolution, ecology and so on we shall have succeeded in some measure.

Our most recent exhibition deals with arthropods - insects, spiders, crabs and so on - and it did not take much research to confirm the rather negative attitude of visitors towards these animals. They do not have the obvious popular appeal of birds and mammals which filled our museums in the past and still do so in some natural history museums. Yet insects have found a niche in virtually every ecosystem. How do we persuade our public of the interest and importance of this group?

We treated the subject by selecting a few themes which take the visitor's own experience as a point of contact: feeding; household pests, colour and insects as architects. Again, I have to stress that such an exhibition can be produced only by a large institution with appropriate funding. In addition to these so-called "permanent" exhibitions we also hope to find the resources to react quickly to environmental events with temporary exhibitions. We are also exploring collaborative projects with colleagues in other European natural history museums.

I have perhaps spent too much time talking about the Natural History Museum in London but I did so to explain the nature of our "revolution" and to persuade you that any institution of the kind we are discussing - museums large and small, science centres, interpretive centres at nature reserves - can justify its communication role only if it has a clear understanding of visitor needs and behaviour and the consequent constraints on exhibition design.

Because of professional divisions within museums "education" has usually come to mean the special programmes and activities targetted at schols students and other homogeneous groups. Exhibitions are surely educational - provoking critical thought and facilitating information transfer - but their planning is usually in the hands of curators and designers. Obviously the two aspects are complementary and any museum exhibition planning system must reflect this.

Museums should, and indeed do, provide for all ages so that over the last 20 years or so we have seen "outreach" programmes, travelling exhibitions and other activities developed by museums to make contact with a region beyond the urban centre. Throughout Europe these developments are now the rule rather than the exception. Remember that for many in the urban populations of Europe the natural history museum may well be the first introduction to the life of the fields, the forests and the wilderness.

There is no doubt that museums have, in many senses, moved on from the 19th century; they have also proliferated. Some observers have dared to ask: are there too many? In Britain excessive concern with the heritage, natural and man-made is seen by some to be a national disease. But I suggest that this is not confined to Britain. The growth in the number of museums - even those which come

strictly within the ICOM definition - since 1950 has been extraordinary, certainly in the developed world. Any sociological explanation is perhaps more within Kenneth Hudson's province rather than mine.

We have seen that museums have evolved through the impulse to collect and to evoke, through the collections formed, historical human cultures as well as aspects of the natural world. Museum people are certainly conscious of a major constraint on the effective interpretation of a total environment when artefacts and organisms are taken out of their context. This was partly the thinking behind the idea of the ecomuseum, a development associated with the late Georges Henri Rivière. Although he drew on the Scandinavian experience of the "open-air" museum which, generally speaking, brings together on one site, vernacular buildings from other places, the ecomuseum claims greater authenticity by interpreting the totality of a community without uprooting any one part. The ecomuseum is well-presented in France with her strong regional "personalities" but while the emphasis in an ecomuseum is on human culture - 20th century ethnography if you like - this obviously cannot be divorced from the natural environment. It seems that, in common with other "heritage" institutions today, ecomuseums can survive only by attracting sponsorship and the involvement of commercial organisations within their communities.

I have discussed the pathways by which museums are becoming more accessible to the outside world in the context of education and interpretation. I want now to refer to that other component of the museum duality: research. Yet can we really put education and research into distinct conceptual departments? You will remember what the British Museum Act saw as the other purpose of a collection: for the "learned and curious". To generalise again, some museums do more research than others but those concerned with natural science collections have a particular obligation to undertake research and to make the results of that research accessible. Accessible to whom? Science is, or should be, public knowledge so that the results of research should be made accessible to the museum-visiting public through the media already discussed. Secondly, no research can be deemed "scientific" until it has been published and thrown open to critical discussion by the international community. This is the normal practice of science. Thirdly, wherever possible the museum-based research should be made available to governments, local authorities and planning bodies. Museums have perhaps not been aggressive enough in persuading funding bodies of the value of taxonomic research.

I mentioned earlier that there was a strong tradition of the amateur naturalist in Britain, a legacy which is evident today in the network of local natural history societies and country naturalist trusts. Indeed there is an bewildering number of other official and semi-official organisations in Britain today concerned with the environment in one way or another - the Countryside Commission, the Nature Conservancy Council, the Royal Society for Nature Conservation, The National Trust, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and so on. Now museums have always seen themselves as major sources of information about the environment but it was only with the advent of computerised records that this potential could be properly realised

particularly in co-operation with county naturalist trusts. We now have in Britain a network of biological and geological record centres with a number of museums acting as co-ordinating agents, as in Leicester and the Hancock Museum in the North of England. The SAMDOK project in Sweden is a comparable exercise in the documentation of contemporary human culture.

I would like to offer a final example of specialised museum based research and its implications. This is a lichen, a composite organism part algae, part fungus. The composite nature of lichens was not recognised until the early 19th century and it is only in recent years that their peculiar chemistry and symbiosis have been recognised. Some species are sensitive to atmospheric pollution and are proving to be valuable indicators of, for example, the effects of acid rain. There are two points to be made here. First, such research could have been initiated only where well-documented, historical museum-based collections existed. Reference collections must be the starting point for sampling and surveys carried out today at an international level. The second point concerns public attitudes. Traditionally natural history museums have been perceived as displays of animals, birds, shells, fossils, minerals and other objects which have some direct macroscopic appeal. It would be difficult to imagine a display along traditional lines of lichens and the same is true for any other group of organisms where refined techniques are needed for their understanding at microscopic level. Because of the demonstrable environmental importance of lichens we surely have a duty to communicate something about them to the public?

I will not attempt to predict future developments of museums and I would not like to generalise across the whole spectrum of European museum activity. Other speakers will, I hope, be able to offer a more detailed picture. If natural history museums are to prove their value to society in general and professional workers in particular they will have to communicate effectively and manage themselves efficiently.

Recognition of the social rôle of museums and
other similar structures by public authorities

by

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This paper necessarily falls into two parts. First, I have to give my view as to what the 'social rôle' of a museum is, assuming it has such a rôle, and, secondly, I shall discuss the meaning of the word 'recognition'. 'Public authorities' I propose to define very briefly and without getting involved in unnecessary complications and subtleties, by saying that they are the local and national bodies who spend taxpayers' money.

All museums, whether they like it or not, do have a social rôle, simply because people visit them. They have contacts with the outside world. It is, I suppose, just possible to imagine a museum without visitors, but such a place would be either extremely private or extremely unsuccessful. I have on more than one occasion spent two or three hours in a museum which had no visitors at all during the period I was there. It worried me, but it did not seem to bother the curator at all. I think he regarded his collections much as a rich woman thinks of her jewels or a bibliophile his books, as beautiful objects, lovingly treasured and cared for. The public was irrelevant. The director of a large and prestigious art museum in Austria - a very pleasant, friendly man - went so far as to say to me that, if he had his way, the doors of his museum would remain closed and no one would be allowed to enter before he had proved himself worthy of doing so. 'But that,' he said, 'I suppose I should never be allowed to do so.' 'No,' I told him, 'you would not. Your museum is maintained and your salary is paid out of the money your fellowcitizens pay in taxes. That is why they would demand a right of entry.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I know. I have to let everybody in. But I am sure a great many other directors and curators have the same attitude as I do. They would like to keep the man in the street out, but they are forced by law to let him in.'

I have often thought about this story. I am sure I was talking to a very honest man, a man who saw no point in casting pearls before swine. One could say that such a person had no business to be in charge of a publicly-funded museum, and I suppose that is true. But one could put the situation very differently, by saying that this director loved his collections so much that he could not bear the thought of them being polluted by the gaze and chatter of ignorant people. Such treatment would seem to him not unlike vandals treading on a gardener's flowerbeds or, in another realm, gastronomic barbarians emptying a bottle of ketchup over a beautiful meal.

To insist that museums have a social rôle is to be fundamentally optimistic about one's fellow human beings, and one either is that or one is not. The same could be said about teachers

and schools. One has to believe that children are improvable or one could not continue with the job. I have, however, a close friend, a man who retired recently from schoolteaching and who attributed his success in the work to a profound conviction that children were basically evil. Teachers who believed that children were essentially good were, he was certain, condemned from the beginning not only to failure, but to a very unhappy career. He himself, he said, had been extremely happy, because he started from the correct premise.

I mention these things because we always seem to believe nowadays that museums do have a social rôle, that they can make people and society better. But it would do no harm to question this assumption from time to time. Do museums really have this function, or is it merely in fashion to think so? Suppose museum-going, like theatre-going or concert-going or eating a splendid meal in a delightful restaurant or listening to a Mozart mass in Salzburg, were simply and unashamedly a pleasure? Suppose there were no pretence that it was, like a bottle of medicine, doing us good. Would we still feel able to demand public money to subsidise it?

I ask this question in complete sincerity and because I myself do get a great deal of pure pleasure from visiting museums and because I am not sure whether my pleasures ought to be subsidised out of public funds. Or, if so, which pleasures should be subsidised and which should be left to the whims and uncertainties of the free market. I do certainly believe that any civilised society worthy of the name will do everything it can to fight the forces of crudity and barbarism and that such a campaign will involve spending money, but I mistrust phrases like 'museums have a social rôle to play', firstly because I think they betray a self-righteous and pompous attitude and secondly because they are a well-tried way of extracting money from the public coffers. Say 'museums have an important social rôle' and one stands a good chance of getting quite a lot. There are politics in museums as in every other form of human activity.

But I have another reason for mistrusting the over-serious approach to the problem. It is that one cannot guarantee what people's responses will be to a museum or a museum display. The museum curator can desire and intend one reaction and the museum visitor can experience quite another. I should like to give you two examples of this. Some years ago I went to an exhibition in England organised and paid for by the Central Electricity Generating Board, the body which is responsible for the nation's electricity supply. It contained a number of excellent models of nuclear reactors and its purpose, its social rôle, if you like, was to inform members of the public about nuclear power and to explain the safety measures which were taken to prevent disaster from occurring. By the side of one of the exhibits, I noticed a young man in his early twenties making a drawing. Was he, I asked, interested in nuclear energy? 'Not in the least,' he replied. 'I am an artist and these reactors have such beautiful shapes, I could look at them all day.' But the official social rôle of the exhibition was to inform people about nuclear energy, not to produce exciting shapes for artists.

My second example was more recently, in a museum devoted to film, photography and television. There I found myself talking to a woman who had brought her two children with her, a girl of 10 and a

boy of 7. The boy was busy pushing buttons, to make the exhibits work. Did they often come here, I asked. 'Oh yes,' she said, very often. 'My son learnt to read here because, if he couldn't read the instructions, he couldn't understand what he was supposed to be doing.' But the museum did not receive its money in order to teach small boys to read. This was an unpredictable by-product, a bonus.

And this is my point. Many, perhaps most, of the results of museum-going are unpredictable, they are by-products, and for this reason the 'social rôle' of museums lies more in providing a stimulating, free atmosphere, in which any kind of thoughts can be sparked off, than in instituting ideas which are considered to be of social value. The benefits of museum-going cannot be programmed, but they are nonetheless real because of this. In this respect, museums are very similar to television. They are a poor teaching medium, but they can be wonderfully effective at stimulating and changing attitudes.

I can think of two natural history museums which illustrate this excellently. One is in Greece, the other in the Netherlands. Until ten or so years ago, Greece had no natural history museums at all. Greeks, in general, showed little interest in their natural environment. Greece, so far as Greeks were concerned, was archaeology, buildings, sea and sunsets. It was not animals, birds nor trees. Greek children did not keep pets.

And then two very great and indeed heroic people, Angelos and Niki Goulandris, decided to take on what must have appeared the impossible task of persuading their fellow countrymen to take an interest in their natural environment. With their own money, they built, stocked and arranged a large natural history museum of the highest quality, in Athens, and they set in motion an ambitious and imaginative educational programme around the museum. Their market was children. Adults they felt were corrupted beyond the point of return, but something, they were sure, could be done with the children. Something had to be done, if Greece was to be entitled to the name of a civilised country. And, since this amazingly un-Greek museum opened, something has been done. Greek children have entered a world that was previously denied to them and a generation is growing up with the green values that their country, like all others, so desperately needs. A branch museum has been opened in Corfu, a forest land has been bought and gradually both Greek families and the Greek government are coming to see that in this, as in other fields, Greek ways have to change. The experiment and the faith have paid off and public money has at least begun to flow in the direction of the museum, in order to support its pioneering educational work. But there is a very long way to go. Guide-dogs for the blind are still not even possible in Greece, because Greeks will not allow them to travel with them on any form of public transport, so rendering them useless.

The other place I had in mind was Emmen, in the north of the Netherlands, where another great pioneer, Aleid Rensen-Oosting, has created a remarkable hybrid of zoo, natural history museum and ethnographical museum, which has been extremely successful, not only in attracting large numbers of visitors, but in persuading them to view life from an ecological standpoint. Part zoo, part museum, part exhibition centre, the Noorder Dierenpark - Northern Animal Park does

not communicate precisely the same idea - aims at showing that all living creatures, man included, have to share the fate of the same environment. One cannot study them in separate compartments. 'Society' includes animals, birds and plants, as well as people, and the Noorder Dierenpark's social rôle consists of a public which is increasingly willing to accept it. The Noorder Dierenpark, created by private money, is the greenest of green museums and its value is now being reflected in the increasing amount of public money which is being added to its financial mix.

What I have been trying to say is that public money should be given to museums for the right reasons. Those reasons are an enthusiasm for stirring up people's thinking and for preventing it from following its natural course, that is, fossilising, and a belief, amounting to a crusade, that even the most stupid and obstinate people are capable of having sensible thoughts occasionally, if museum-going is sold to them as a pleasure, not as a study or a form of self-improvement.

Partner Agencies

by

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Curators in natural history museums are generally both scientists and exhibition specialists. Our museums have a long tradition for cooperation across national borders, and in their scientific capacity curators have always exchanged information and loans of material with colleagues in other museums. The preparation of type catalogues and inventories of old collections has greatly helped in distributing information to other curators and this is the kind of assistance a museum may offer towards their research. The transfer of catalogues to computer files which has been initiated in many museums will enable us to extend this type of cooperation by linking the museums through data networks, thus facilitating the search for relevant material and assuring that maximum use is made of museum collections.

Within the last forty years the teaching of systematic biology has been downgraded and has reached a very low level at most universities. New fields such as molecular biology and ultrastructural research tended to make systematics appear very old-fashioned. And yet, the ability to identify species is still a must in biology, alone for the fact alone that a correct species name is the key to all existing literature on the species in question. The need for systematic biologists is becoming more and more evident to ecologists and scientists engaged in environmental monitoring programmes. As systematic expertise is difficult to build up in a university once the systematic institutes have deteriorated or disappeared, museums where this expertise has survived can play an active role in educating students and post-doctorals in modern taxonomy. This is so much more necessary now as it is realised that much of our effort in environmental protection must be aimed at preserving the diversity of life forms.

In monitoring programmes designed to follow the development over periods of time of biotic communities, proper identification of specimens and the preservation of selected materials for future reference are necessary. With their experience in these fields, museums are attractive partners for national environmental agencies. In a number of cases, identification centres have been created in close cooperation with larger museums, and the initiative taken by the British Museum (Natural History) and the Zoological Museum, Amsterdam towards the elaboration of computerised identification programmes is a further step in this direction.

In the current debate on the deterioration of our natural environment both the organisations dedicated to environmental protection and their immediate adversaries, industry and agriculture, can become very emotional in their statement of the problems and the assurance of their innocence in their attempts to influence the public and the decision makers. With their traditions for serious research and contact with a wide public through exhibitions and other

informative efforts founded on this research, the natural history museums can perform an important service to society by presenting well-founded, impartial information which can help both the general public and the decision makers to form their own opinion based on facts. For this to remain possible, museums must maintain their credibility, which must be borne in mind whenever a museum enters into co-operation with partner agencies outside its own circle.

This credibility together with the expertise behind the exhibition work, makes natural history museums attractive partners in cooperation with the public school system. Such a cooperation can take on many forms, from simple class visits to museums which incorporate material sent to the schools to actual teaching of school classes in the museum by museum staff. In 1972 the Zoological Museum in Copenhagen took the initiative to create a separate school service involving a formalised yet flexible array of offers for teaching pupils from all grades of the public school system. This idea proved successful and the school service has now grown to comprise similar facilities at the Copenhagen Zoo, the Copenhagen Aquarium, the National Historical Museum, art museums, etc. The funding for this service is provided jointly by the museums and the town county councils in the areas involved, and is administratively governed by a committee of museum curators, politicians and local administrators.

Many natural history museums have traditional links with associations such as ornithological societies, entomological societies, etc. The societies have an obvious advantage of this close association with the museum experts, and the research carried out at the museums can greatly benefit from the help of numerous good amateur biologists. Fauna inventories, bird countings and bird banding are areas in which biological societies and museums can work together in harmony, and very often such projects would be impossible without the assistance of the societies. Naturally, amateur biologists are enthusiastic about the preservation of their plant or animal groups, and many of the biological societies act as powerful pressure groups in the political struggle for the environment. Their enthusiasm can at times lead to exaggerated viewpoints which cannot be shared by the museum personnel who seek to maintain a balanced attitude. This can, at times, create tensions between societies and museums, but usually it is realised that the cause to which both parties are dedicated is best served by the maintenance of the museums' credibility rather than a participation in a too weakly founded emotional campaign.

In most of the relations with the media world, museums do not differ from any other agency which wishes to use the media to reach a wide public, except perhaps in the fact that natural history is a subject enjoying a widespread interest making it relatively easy for museums to get a good coverage. Television programmes featuring panels of museum curators or a full page in the cultural section of the Sunday papers are well-known examples of this. At times, the association with the media can go even further. A project aimed at introducing interactive video in the museums has, e.g., involved parts of the staffs of the Copenhagen natural history museums very directly in the creation of a video disc on Greenland produced by the Danish National Television Corporation.

In their association with business and industry, museums tend to be rather shy. As funds from the traditional government sources are becoming insufficient for the proper management of museums due to budget cuts, private foundations pay an ever increasing part of the research and the exhibitions at the natural history museums, and the question of sponsorships from business and industry is repeatedly discussed. Because the museums have a reputation for impartiality and credibility, they can be used by business companies, not directly in sales promotion but as a vehicle to express a sympathetic image of the company. When considering sponsorships, museums must bear in mind that their credibility is a very important asset which should not be jeopardised through careless choice of sponsors. It must always be borne in mind that even though funds from grants and sponsorships can be important for many of the activities desirable for a museum, these funds actually add up to a very small amount compared to the basic expenses of salaries, buildings, etc. borne by the regular funding agency. Often, it appears to the public that some outside source has paid for an entire exhibition when, in fact, the outside money only accounts for, e.g., 10 % of the actual expenses.

In their working relationships with business and industry, museums do not differ from any other enterprise of some standing. Because of their reputation with the public, museums are often regarded as prestigious partners, and the expertise of the museum staff can often be valuable in joint enterprises concerning details of curatorial work or exhibition hardware. An example is the effort to avoid deposits from the preservation fluids on minute marine specimens. In the search for the source of these deposits, conducted together with a large medical company, it was realised that these deposits came from the plastic containers in which alcohol of formaldehyde was temporarily stored and consisted of high-molecular paraffins. As it was realised that such molecules introduced in the blood stream can lead to clots, this cooperation eventually led to the introduction of improved plastics for transfusion bags and tubes. Another example is the development of cooperation between the Zoological Museum, our school service and IBM Denmark in a system for presenting interactive video which is now in service at the museum and has been valuable in business developments in that field for our commercial partner.

As we all realise, the links between museums and the surrounding society are numerous and varied. The message that natural history museums want to bring across to the public is the same for all these museums: man is part of nature and we cannot destroy nature without destroying ourselves. All our links with society should be utilised to diffuse that message in the most efficient way which very often means that museums must try to become less shy and act more actively than has been traditional in our field. Influence is best obtained through cooperation wherever possible, as long as we preserve our professional standards and traditional credibility.

The techniques of the
museumological revolution

by

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Strategies and examples of the presentation of expositions

I do not believe that the term "revolution" is appropriate to designate the new didactic and methodological conceptions which today illustrate many of the natural history museums. If one must, by necessity, define these innovations in only one word, one should choose "evolution" which is a lot more familiar to a specialist of natural sciences like me. It would, to be certain, passionately analyse the manner more completely and deepen the mutations of which our museums are the object in utilising some characteristic notions of biological evolution such as "evolution radiation", "specialisation", "adaptation" or "living fossils", but we would over flow largely the framework of the present document. I will limit myself thus to describing a humble part of the evolution in presenting the efforts that we use at the "Mensch und Natur" museum in Munich, in order to instruct the visitors without going so far as to bore them. This museum, of which the surface area for exhibitions will be 2 500 m², will open its doors in the spring of 1990. I chose three of eight sections in preparation in order to expose our planning strategies with the help of concrete examples.

1. Exposition "The nerves and the brain".

Conforming to the educational mission that was entrusted to us by the Bavarian government in 1970, our goal is to provide information on man, both sick and healthy, as well as his biology and behavior. The exposition, "The nerves and the brain", is the first that we have put on. We have carried out to this effect about 60 objects from 1974-1977, the year in the course of which these latter ones took place at a special exhibition in the "Deutsche museum", which is a technical museum also situated in Munich. With some elements omitted for the purposes of streamlining, this exhibition was later presented as a permanent exhibition in the "Deutsche Museum" for a period of seven years. From a didactic point of view, our goal was to illustrate a theme having a direct relationship with the human biology. We wanted to give a morphological and functional description of fundamental biological phenomena and to present notably the anomalous and disfunctional consequences, and this on the biological and medical level, as from a social angle. We chose this approach because it is well known that no malady exposes itself so rapidly to social discrimination than a sickness having its origin in the nervous system. With this exposition, we also wished not only to inform and educate visitors of all ages and educational levels and if possible to

change their behavior, but also to interest them without boring them because this exposition should have been instructive while also being amusing. From a methodological point of view, our goal was to resort largely to electronics in order to bring about the maximum interaction between visitors and these objects and to utilise all the possibilities made available by audiovisual means. On the thematic level, then, the natural object passed to the second level in relation to clay models, drawings and audiovisual presentation. A human brain conserved in formaldehyde was the only object in the exposition of the type of which one sees in the museums in the classical sense of the term. Also, it was eclipsed by a giant clay figure of a brain of which the different parts could be lit up with the press of a button.

Two elaborate examples of interactive clay figures illustrated certain functional modes of the human body. The first of these was a sensory nerve cell two meters long which, with the pressing of various buttons, displayed the link between the intensity of a stimulus and the conduction of the nerve influx thus permitting it to assimilate the principle of inhibition and excitation synapses.

A demonstration of the relationship between cause and effect of an anomaly was made possible by a mannequin on which the visitors could, by means of a cursor, move around the site of a lesion on the spinal cord; the drawings which were illuminated permitted one to visualise the gravity of the handicap which resulted.

As we have already said, a visit to a museum should also be an occasion to amuse oneself, and thus provisions were made to this end. Among others, a pianist whose Cerebellum could be put out of circuit, that which was not evidently without serious repercussions on its prestation; a memorisation test in which ten numbered sportive scenes were presented to the visitors who should have then chosen the correct numbers corresponding to the scenes as they were re-presented (the scenes being in an unordered state and without number when re-presented); a game with Nessie the Loch Ness monster, which permitted the visitors to measure their reaction time thus making the monster bellow if the reaction was sufficiently quick; a "reflex-man" to which one could throw a ball on the foot after having programmed him to react as a man "surprised", "clumsy", or "astute" to see how he would react. A precise pedagogical link of course united all these games together.

The game with Nessie, which permitted the visitors to test their reaction time, was not simply a means by which they could perform experiments on themselves. It was also a test of pupillary reflex and an experience designed to illustrate the combined role of the two cerebral spheres. To conclude, I will give two examples of the use of audio-visual aids. Through a choice of slides, the visitors were able to elaborate their own programming in order to learn how to suppress pain, and five video films, permanently shown, which dealt with certain psychiatric themes such as "psychosis" and "drug addiction".

The exposition "The nerves and the brain" was well received by the public and the working documents were, of course, made available to students who came with their professors.

This exposition is entirely re-altered at the present time, but while still having a regard for the continuity of the presentation.

2. "History of life" Section.

As a second example to illustrate our methods, I chose the section devoted to evolution, because it differs on all points from the exposition on the nerves and the brain. Having been given the fundamental importance and well-knowing the theme of evolution, I believe to be able to limit myself to describing the pedagogical objectives which have inspired us. Acting from fossils, we make available a rich palette of natural specimens which is suitable perfectly for a museum making it possible to trace the history of life including that of man. It is a question especially of appealing to the imagination of the visitors, in other words, to motivate them so that they find interest in the journey across the history of plants and animals. In order to reach this objective, we decided to exclusively keep to classical and traditional museological methods. Twelve dioramas with three dimensional life-size images of animals and plants retracing the principal steps of evolution in chronological order, from the édiacarienne fauna of 650 million years ago to the appearance of Homo habilis, 2 million years ago. In the display cases, the fossils illustrating the different periods are complemented by corresponding titled documentation. The presentation is completed by a large number of illustrations and explanatory texts.

The inscriptions are conceived and arranged in such a way that even the hurried visitor can remember selectively the essential information that we have judged useful to communicate to him. This presentation of evolution innovates, to my senses, by the fact that it endeavors to retrace with no solution the continuity of the history of life, on one hand without placing too much emphasis on the most well-known periods, such as the golden age of dinosaurs, and on the other without giving too much weight to certain events of purely local interest having marked this evolution, things that, it goes of itself, would appear to me as important as legitimising if it were a question of another conception.

The success of the strategy adopted for this exposition will depend entirely on resonances awakened inside the visitors by the two dioramas created by us with much care and with precise co-operation with an American specialist. It is worth also to mention the numerous illustrations which, even though in black and white, were rather costly for us.

The very mechanisms of the evolution are only lightly touched while waiting to be placed in a latter project.

3. "Seeing nature with a bit of fantasy. The play natural sciences are not only reserved for children.

At the time of setting up a section destined specially for young visitors, we put together, contrary to all, something completely new involving interactive pieces reacting with animal plant and natural objects. For the first time, we present four educational software games by us accompanied, as in other exhibitions, with a video disc.

Those that participate in these interactive electronic games, the final results of which are posted, engage, for example, in such activities as making out the vertebrates from the invertebrates, refinding the original continents of 20 animals, distinguishing from ichtyoides fish, attributing to certain plants the corresponding seeds or fruits, listening to sounds of bird calls and identifying them with the birds, classifying fifteen arthropods in five groups each three spiders, three insects, etc. In the engaged course between certain animals and man, it is necessary to announce in advance the order in which they will all arrive at the goal. As for the little train track, it can stop beside the reproduction of different interesting trees for which there are informative lighted projections. As in a rally, those who are interested in how animals raise their young and take care of them should pass by ten minidioramas showing a stickleback, a domestic mouse, a dung-beetle etc. of which the traps open each time for as long as they respond just to a question appearing in the form of an illuminated inscription. The principle of learning by touching is one we use a lot.

In order to assemble vanishing elements giving birth to imaginary animals or to study invertebrates on all the seams, there is no need of electronics.

Beside certain objects, from short sound-tracked scenes giving information, by the voice of children, on animals such as gulls, fighters, duck-billed platypus, are presented in a setting similar to a diorama.

The software mentioned earlier allow visitors to identify twenty animals having as habitats forests, mountains, prairies, or the water. For each animal, the screen gives up to three clues the last of which is completely distinctive making it possible to identify the animal. With a little knowledge of zoology, two clues or even one should suffice, but one must pay attention, the final grade can suffer from too much haste! We can save the games, print them, and use them later to obtain data on the level of current knowledge or on the accomplished progress of those who participate several times in the game.

The plants neither are neglected. Four radiophonic pieces showing the elf Pumuck and his master Elder, favourite heroes of German children (and their parents), give information through chosen examples on the four habitats. Colour photos of plants in question are presented by means of video discs and monitors. These pieces were written, according to our outline, by the same author of the Pumuckl stories. The voices are those of the actors which originally incarnated the story heroes on discs and in television series.

All the objects presented, being completed and surmounted by simple window displays are, to be sure, classified by themes, for example "Building plans", "Habitats", "Reproduction", or movement, but they can be utilised in any order, which is inevitably the case, for example, when the students of a class take the room of attack. This type of device attracts equally adults, as a pilot project permitted to assure us, they are themselves also invited to see the exposition (from where the title of this one here).

As for those that don't have the heart to play, they can follow, in an adjoining projection room, some films of the celebrated German animal cinematographer H. Sielmann, films which are perfectly suited to the spirit of the exhibition. We have them on a selection of discs for which H. Sielman himself wrote the commentary according to our decisions.

As for knowing if our museum, whose inauguration is near and in connection with several of our strategies I propose to you, and thus several examples, will be able to affirm itself as a new genre of nature museum and continue to blossom, it is incumbent upon our visitors, acting as "the selection factor", to thus decide.

A new job: museum manager:
from traditional curator to modern museum director

by

M A PAYARD
Museum of Natural History
Grenoble (France)

In the space of 20 years the museum scene has undergone a major upheaval. What the participants had to say during the two days of this colloquy is undeniably a consequence of that upheaval.

Cathedral-museum, church-museum, temple-museum, school-museum, theatre-museum, ecomuseum, scientific and cultural centre - all these new words and concepts provide topics for discussion at conferences and oppose, divide or unite those attending them.

Museology, museography, conservation, research, extension, staging, pleasure, aesthetics, curiosity, data banks, public, patrons, sponsors - how many new terms, functions and activities have recently become familiar to those of us responsible for the running of small or large museums.

But what is perhaps most extraordinary is that, for all the multitude of ideas and experiments, and despite this calling into question of the idea of a museum and of the future of museums as an institution, one aspect of the question is rarely raised: namely, the function of the curator.

In 1979 I was appointed Director of the Grenoble Natural History Museum, a museum listed on account of the importance of its collections. I was fresh from University, and had had no training prior to taking on this responsibility. There was nothing unusual about this, since no national training schemes existed in the field.

I discovered a museum in the most traditional mould, a worthy upholder of the traditions of the turn of the century. From the isolated curator-cum-researcher to the cluttered, dusty and musty exhibition rooms, nothing contradicted the traditional image of a museum that is firmly rooted in the mind of the public, and still more so in the minds of policy makers.

Thus began the long journey in search of improvement. Many experiments were tried: temporary exhibitions within and outside the premises, approaches to cultural and scientific partners in the town and the département, contacts with voluntary associations and industry, extension of activities to the regional and national nature reserves, promotion of the modern image of a museum among the public authorities, preparation and computerisation of inventories of collections, and participation in environmental research programmes.

In ten years, this obscure institution has risen to the forefront of French natural history museums, involved the public authorities, and become a cultural priority in the town of Grenoble.

The results include 23 temporary exhibitions, 95,000 visitors, a twentyfold increase in the operating budget (excluding cash in hand and wages), which now stands at 1 million francs, an increase from 7 to 24 in permanent staff, together with about 10 volunteers, a policy for cataloguing collections and an educational activities policy, and culminated in the contribution in 1987 of a 31 million franc budget voted by the town of Grenoble, the département of the Isère, the Rhône-Alpes region, and the State, towards enlarging and renovating the museum.

A few months after the inauguration of the new Natural History Museum of Grenoble, conceived and oriented around the specific theme of "the Alpine Environment", in which conservation, research and dissemination of knowledge are brought together in what is intended to be a harmonious balance, the Director cannot but ask himself in what ways his function is evolving.

- the curator of a large museum can no longer hope to pursue personal research.
- the curator must be active in the cultural life of the city. Whether he likes it or not, he is a public figure who participates in the cultural and scientific development of his town.
- the curator cannot disregard the development of museographic techniques.
- the curator cannot overlook the importance of dissemination of scientific knowledge, particularly regarding the life, earth and human sciences.
- the curator must be supported by technically and scientifically qualified staff.
- the curator must be a manager, and seek the financing necessary for the development of the institution.

No longer simply a scholar, the curator has become the manager of an institution integrated in the life of the community, and therefore competing with other cultural and scientific activities.

This important development in the function of a curator also applies to those responsible for natural history museums in other cities (such as Nantes, Dijon, Orléans and Lyon), several of whom have this year, in co-operation with the National Natural History Museum, proposed amending the 1948 statutes and introducing a post-graduate diploma in museology.

If it accepts these proposals, the Government might then provide its listed museums with high-level directors, enable the towns to step up their efforts to modernise their natural history museums, and thereby give scientific culture a new image of quality and dynamism.

In this new form, French museums could then offer a serious contribution to Europe.

A new museum: choice between removing
renovating or rebuilding

by

Mr G PINNA
Museo Civico di Storia Naturale
MILAN (Italy)

A new museum: choice between removing, renovating or rebuilding.

The majority of natural history museums, including some of the biggest in the world, owe their rise to the activity of scientists, collectors, voluntary organisations or scientific institutions. These individuals or groups had brought together around them such large scientific collections or had aroused such keen cultural interest that the authorities spontaneously founded museums to preserve the collections and perpetuate the independent scientific activities connected with them.

The causal pattern preceding the founding and development of natural history museums has not changed.

The history of museology over the last 50 years proves that, in general, the founding of a new natural history museum is rarely the result of planning in the cultural policy field, contrary to what happens with history or art museums.

This is particularly true of the European countries - Italy in particular - which have invested large sums in the re-organisation of art and history museums but have overlooked science museums and the work they do in protecting and conserving the natural heritage, disseminating scientific culture and, above all, advancing research in the natural science field.

The lack of planning where natural history museums is concerned has several causes: first, the narrow view of culture, which takes little account of the scientific aspect; secondly, the limited importance attached to the role of these museums in promoting knowledge of nature, a better relationship between man and the environment and better land use; lastly - and most commonly - sheer economics, since a natural history museum is not often a tourist museum, and hence not an attractive investment.

Generally speaking, therefore, the founding of new science museums has taken place without any regard for the idea of regional planning. This situation does, however, reflect cultural realities of major significance which can provide pointers to future work.

Italy's experience shows that the development of scientific institutions stems from private initiative: groups of residents of a particular area form an association to protect and promote a fossil-bearing or mining site, to purchase and display to the public a private collection belonging to the history of the region. Not until later might these small museums be acquired and become public property.

The small museums which grow up in regions remote from the national centre are managed by voluntary workers and are usually lacking in scientific production capability and sound museological techniques.

The lack of planning encourages the disorderly growth of numerous small museums which are important for a knowledge of local natural history, but precludes a wide dissemination of scientific culture, proper protection of the scientific heritage and the development of research in the natural science field.

Pressing environmental problems are currently leading to a rediscovery of natural history museums, and in particular to a recognition of the role they can play at the present time.

Faced with the choice between removing, renovating or rebuilding, we have to opt for renovating and rebuilding: renovating old institutions, providing them with financial and human resources and enabling them to perform a museum's three fundamental tasks - research, conservation of the heritage and cultural dissemination.

Only by creating a network of museums linked together by co-operative relationships and abandoning the centralistic idea embodied in large national museums will we be able to achieve a real cultural policy: uniform nationwide cultural progress and the guarantee of extensive freedom in scientific research and conservation of the heritage.

Renovation of the Milan Natural History Museum, which began in 1980, took account of these general principles and has therefore followed three main trends of development.

The most important of these trends was ensuring that permanent exhibitions became an educational instrument serving the public and the academic world. This was based on the belief that the purpose of a natural history museum is to give the fullest possible picture of the world in its natural aspects. The museum's exhibitions have therefore been completely transformed: the systematic approach has been abandoned in favour of an exhibition organised by major scientific themes and a reconstruction of the various natural habitats around the world.

The second trend has involved extending the museum's regional influence. In particular, small museums have emerged in places famous for their natural resources, and in particular their palaeontological treasures.

Not only the Milan museum, but also the local authorities and local scientific associations participate in the management of these museums.

This co-operation between the Milan museum and the region's other groups has reinforced the other trend of development, namely an increase in the museum's own scientific production. The co-operation of private research groups in natural science field and small regional museums has made it possible to carry out some highly interesting projects, and particularly palaeontological excavations in various parts of Lombardy, and to organise a network of informants permitting not only close monitoring of cetaceans in Italian waters but also the recovery of numerous specimens washed up on beaches, which are of outstanding museological and scientific interest.

STATEMENT BY MRS GIULIA PODESTA LE POITTEVIN

Head of School Education Division
on the Symposium
"MUSEUMS AND THE EUROPEAN HERITAGE: TREASURE OR TOOL?"

to be held in Salzburg, Austria in autumn 1990

Mr Chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you for allowing me to say a few words about a symposium that the Council for Cultural Co-operation is holding, in collaboration with the Austrian authorities, on the theme "Museums and the European heritage: treasure or tool?", at the end of September 1990 in Salzburg.

I am particularly sorry to have been unable to attend your seminar in that the themes you dealt with - making museums more accessible to the outside world, recognising their social role, and their partner agencies in the educational community - seem to mirror the concerns of our own seminar, and also to some extent prefigure the general ideas behind the seminar and its follow-up. Indeed, the speeches that I have read confirm this impression: I was struck by your Chairman's insistence on the united and complementary nature of our museums, and by his call for a "solid and close-knit network".

I am speaking here in the presence of Mr Kenneth HUDSON, who is to chair our symposium, which he is also planning and preparing. He told you here, that "many, perhaps most, of the results of museum-going are unpredictable, they are by-products". Reading this, I can only hope that museum-going will have increasing educational impact thanks to the implementation of recommendations produced by meetings such as yours.

Our symposium is an extension of our efforts to promote the European dimension in education, and its aims are, briefly, the following:

- to show that part of the historic, cultural, artistic, scientific and natural heritage which is housed in museums and other equivalent structures can be used as an effective educational instrument in promoting a European identity;
- to this end, to determine ways of making better use of the educational potential of the museums in our member states (we should remember that the Council for Cultural Co-operation includes the Council of Europe's 23 member states, as well as the Holy See and Yugoslavia).

Under the general heading, "Museums and the European Heritage: treasure or tool?", discussion will centre on themes which are largely framed in question form, for example:

- "Museums: a forum for learning about European identity?";
- "Educational innovations in museums";
- "Museums: melting-pot and/or of subject disciplines?"
- "Museums: springboard for personal and social development?".

The symposium will bring together persons in charge of educational programmes in museums and similar structures; specialists in communication and educational activities in museums; museum curators, and senior civil servants from relevant ministries. The participants will come from member states of the Council for Cultural Co-operation and from Eastern European countries.

Visits to museums such as the Carolino Augusteum, the Museum of Baroque Art, the Nature Museum and the Toy Museum will help to supply parameters and criteria to guide us in thinking at European level about the types of educational initiative we need to make young people from all social categories more aware of Europe and of culture - humanist or scientific:

- the strengths and weaknesses of each museum (capacity to attract the public, special features);
- a museum's capacity to capture the interest of people who are not familiar with its special field or interested in it;
- the degree to which a museum's objectives are apparent;
- the essential, living character of a museum in terms of its environment.

I cannot sufficiently stress how important your findings will be for our symposium.



Les réserves :
des musées
bien vivants



Ecomusée d'Ungersheim

A. De la Roche - D. Vireux

Les musées de nature

Comme tous leurs confrères les musées de nature sont en pleine révolution. Témoin la réunion de près d'une centaine de responsables de ces musées à Strasbourg, fin septembre, à l'initiative du Conseil de l'Europe et de son Comité directeur pour la protection et la gestion de l'environnement et du milieu naturel.

Centré sur le rôle essentiel que les musées jouent dans la connaissance, la valorisation et la préservation du patrimoine européen, ce colloque avait pour but de promouvoir la création d'un réseau de musées de nature qui faciliterait les échanges et ferait mieux connaître les initiatives de chacun.

Pour susciter une plus grande ouverture de ces musées vers le grand public - c'est aussi pour eux un programme d'actualité - ce réseau pourrait permettre l'élaboration d'expositions en commun, l'aide à l'information des données, la formation pour les enfants à l'école et pour les adultes, l'étude et la recherche de nouvelles techniques muséographiques. Mais que sont les musées de la nature ?

Si l'on pense tout de suite aux musées d'histoire naturelle (dépendant en France du ministère de l'Education nationale), aux musées zoologiques, aux jardins botaniques, il ne faut pas oublier non plus les musées de plein air, (nés en Suède au début du siècle et dont un bel exemple est celui d'Ungersheim en Haut-Rhin), les écomusées-musées (de Fourmies-Melon dans le Nord, du Mont-Lozère en Cévennes, et bien d'autres) les sentiers d'interprétation de la nature, les parcs naturels régionaux, les réserves... La plupart de ces musées se trouvent en milieu rural et sont ainsi d'un accès facile pour des populations éloignées des musées de ville traditionnels.

Musées de collections et de recherches, les musées de la nature tendent eux aussi à devenir de grands médias d'information. Ce rôle devient indispensable pour mieux

gérer et protéger ce patrimoine devenu irremplaçable. Au Musée d'histoire naturelle de Londres, par exemple, on est loin maintenant du discours muséographique géré par la seule communauté savante. Designers, concepteurs, scénographes, signaléticiens informaticiens, commerciaux même, apportent désormais leur savoir-faire. Pour impliquer le visiteur dans l'exposition, on stimule son goût de la découverte et du jeu, le renvoyant à des situations de tous les jours, intégrant ainsi le musée à sa vie quotidienne, sur des thèmes de fond (génétique, risques naturels...) et d'actualité (pluies acides, pollutions...).

Le musée peut alors vraiment jouer le rôle social qui lui est dévolu.

Kenneth Hudson, directeur du Musée européen de Bath en Grande-Bretagne, a rappelé, lors de ces journées, l'impact important du musée : une fois satisfaite la curiosité du visiteur, il s'avère un réel stimulant des mentalités. D'élitiste et de confidentiel, il peut devenir un moteur de l'évolution sociale en liaison avec tous ses partenaires : décideurs locaux, entreprises, associations, médias d'information.

Tout cela demande à la fonction de gestionnaire d'évoluer. Pour Armand Fayard, conservateur du Muséum d'histoire naturelle de Grenoble, chaud partisan de cette mutation des musées, ceci ne peut s'envisager qu'avec des personnels hautement qualifiés et des conservateurs dont le rôle sera moins le travail de recherche sur les collections que la diffusion culturelle auprès du public. Cela implique des forces humaines suffisantes mais aussi des moyens financiers en rapport.

Pour en savoir plus :

• Jean-Pierre Ribaut et Françoise Bauer, directeur et assistante de la Division de la protection et de la gestion de l'environnement, Conseil de l'Europe, BP 431 R6 F-67006 Strasbourg cedex, tél. 88 61 49 61.

• Robert Jullien, secrétaire du Comité musées d'histoire naturelle, ICOM, Université des sciences et techniques du Languedoc, place Eugène-Bataillon, 34060 Montpellier cedex 1.



ÉDUCATION À L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Un musée pour les enfants

Le petit musée de Neuwiller, dans les Vosges, est spécialement conçu pour les élèves des écoles.

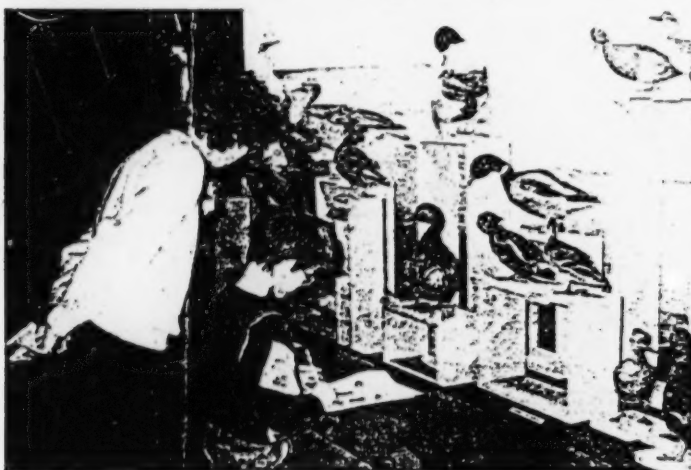
Un séminaire a réuni dernièrement à Strasbourg 108 participants, représentant 52 musées d'histoire naturelle, dont le Muséum de Genève, venant de 17 pays différents. Le but de la rencontre, organisée par le Conseil de l'Europe: montrer le rôle des musées comme outils de connaissance, de valorisation et de préservation du patrimoine naturel européen. Ce rassemblement ne s'adressait pas seulement aux conservateurs de musée, mais aussi aux élus locaux, aux représentants des administrations concernées et aux spécia-

listes de l'information, de l'éducation et de la communication travaillant dans des musées, des zones protégées ou autres structures assimilées.

Tout ce qu'il faut pour approcher la nature

Les participants ont notamment visité le petit musée de Neuwiller, dans les Vosges. Un établissement conçu uniquement pour les élèves des écoles. Les classes, accompagnées d'un professeur, y trouvent tout ce qu'il faut pour approcher la nature et l'appréhender sur divers plans. Des dioramas « muets », sans étiquette, mais avec un certain nombre d'explications constituent le départ d'un trajet nature « intra muros ».

Dans le même bâtiment, des films peuvent être visionnés et une salle de classe est à disposition des enseignants. Là, les enfants approfondissent certaines notions en dessinant, en répondant à des questionnaires, en feuilletant des revues, etc.



Quelque 3000 élèves de l'enseignement primaire viennent chaque année au Muséum d'histoire naturelle de Genève. « Pour bien protéger la nature, il faut bien la connaître », remarque l'animatrice pédagogique.

Pour compléter ces informations, deux possibilités s'offrent aux intéressés. Depuis le musée, ils peuvent partir à pied pour une promenade attractive et instructive dans la nature et pénétrer dans un parc où ils découvriront des espèces vivantes de la région. Autre possibilité: en parcourant quelques dizaines de kilomètres, classes et enseignants feront connaissance avec l'étang de Ha-

nau, en Moselle, entouré de forêts. « La Maison des bois », véritable petit musée ouvert, leur dira tout ou presque sur les végétaux des environs. Ensuite, un parcours fléché leur permettra de découvrir, en situation, ce qu'ils ont appris sur des panneaux. Dans cette région, on a donc instauré une éducation assez complète à l'environnement, que l'on approche par des biais variés, mais tou-

jours complémentaires.

Depuis trois ans, une collaboration active s'est établie entre le Muséum d'histoire naturelle et la Direction de l'Enseignement primaire. Entre 120 et 130 classes (environ 3000 élèves) sont reçues au Muséum chaque année. Pour les enfants de la 3^e à la 6^e année, des sujets zoologiques sont abordés, d'abord par le visionnement d'un film, puis par une animation pédagogique. Dans le secteur paléontologie et géologie, les classes (de la 4^e à la 6^e) passent d'abord dans les galeries et sont ensuite entretenues par l'animatrice pédagogique Mme Bühler, qui déclare: « Pour bien protéger la nature, il faut bien la connaître. Pendant l'animation, nous rendons sensibles les élèves à des aspects actuels des problèmes régionaux de la nature ».

Les enfants peuvent toucher, tâter, mesurer, constater la différence entre les pelages, la dentition, etc. Les conservateurs mettent à disposition tout un matériel extrêmement intéressant. La réaction des élèves: « On reviendra. C'est déjà fini? » (alors qu'ils n'ont même pas eu de récré). Des réactions donc très positives.

Le plan d'études romand fixe d'ailleurs noir sur blanc les buts des sciences naturelles: se situer dans le milieu, faire preuve de curiosité et d'initiative, découvrir la complexité des êtres et des choses, développer et entretenir la sensibilité et le pouvoir d'émerveillement et respecter la nature et ses lois. Dans ce contexte, le Muséum constitue un outil formidable.

Résolution finale: éducation à l'environnement

Les participants au séminaire de Strasbourg, dans une résolution finale, rappellent d'abord que les Musées doivent continuer à assurer leur mission fondamentale: conservatoires de la vie animale et végétale, donc de banques de données, notamment d'espèces éteintes, en voie d'extinction ou « en vie ». Les Musées constituent des collections de références pour l'étude des espèces et populations sauvages actuelles, ils doivent aussi être des informateurs et des diffuseurs de connaissance.

En conclusion, les participants demandent par l'intermédiaire du Comité des Ministres:

- que les gouvernements des pays membres du Conseil de l'Europe et autres associations soutiennent activement les initiatives nouvelles que les divers types de Musées prennent actuellement pour contribuer au développement de la prise de conscience de l'opinion publique en matière d'environnement;
- que le Conseil de l'Europe joue le rôle de catalyseur par la constitution d'un réseau d'échanges, d'informations et d'expériences, portant sur la formation des scolaires et des adultes à l'environnement, l'informatisation des données, l'élaboration d'expositions permanentes ou itinérantes, etc.

Tribune de Genève, 21 octobre 1989

BALLADE AUTOMNALE

Strasbourg: fête de l'esprit et joies gastronomiques

Ville européenne, par excellence, Strasbourg n'est qu'à quatre heures de voiture de Genève et elle mérite le détour.

Siège du Conseil de l'Europe, fondé en 1949, avec 22 pays membres, représentant 350 millions de personnes, Strasbourg est vraiment la capitale de l'Europe (le Palais de l'Europe est ouvert au public). Mais, c'est aussi une ville charmante, animée, avec une université dynamique et un centre commercial bouillonnant de vie.

Le meilleur moyen de prendre un premier contact avec la cité est de monter à bord d'une vedette qui vous promènera sur l'Ill, canalisée tout autour de la ville. D'écluses en monuments, de maisons anciennes en ponts, vous découvrirez l'essentiel d'un périmètre, où vous aurez ensuite des points de repère.

La cathédrale: gigantesque et délicate

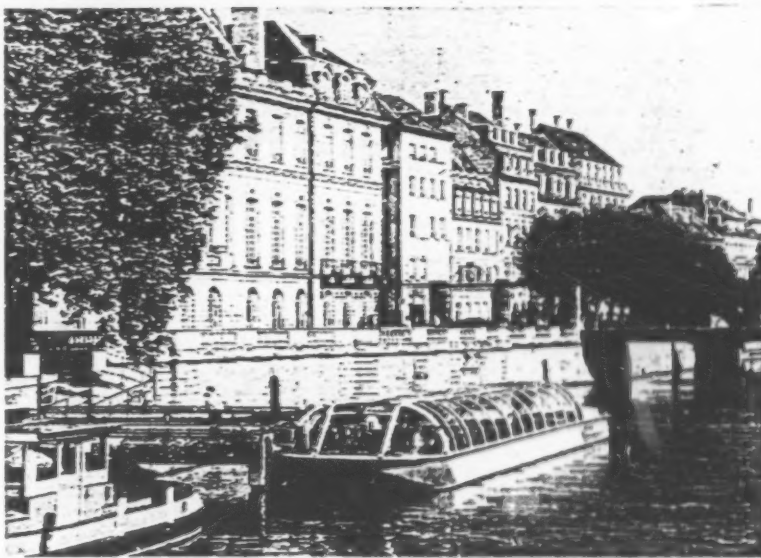
La cathédrale de Strasbourg se dresse sur une large place pavée, comme au Moyen-Âge. Sa hauteur de 142 mètres en fit l'édifice le plus élevé de la chrétienté jusqu'au 19^e siècle. Massive, mais en même temps découpée dans de la dentelle, l'édifice est le lieu de rencontre de tous les touristes. Ils y viennent attirés par l'empreinte de l'Histoire, la richesse de l'architecture et la continuelle animation que des salimbanques de passage entretiennent au pied du sanctuaire.

Pendant la saison touristique, un spectacle son et lumière se déroule tous les soirs à l'intérieur de la cathédrale. Vous pouvez aussi gravir les 329 marches qui conduisent à une esplanade d'où l'on jouit d'un merveilleux panorama sur la ville et ses environs.

Gastronomie et vins

De nombreux restaurants parsèment la ville, parmi lesquels des établissements gastronomiques classés parmi les meilleurs de France. D'authentiques spécialités se dégustent dans les « wins-tub », petits débits de vins, typiquement alsaciens.

Foie gras et choucroute sont les deux



Pour découvrir la cité, montez à bord d'une vedette et parcourez l'Ill (photo L.W.)

fleurons de la cuisine régionale. A côté de ces mets de choix, bien d'autres délices figurent sur les cartes des restaurants : le Baeckeoffle, la tarte flambée et les spaetzle (variété de nouilles) qui accompagnent le poisson, en particulier la célèbre matelote, les volailles et le gibier. Pour le dessert, après un munster bien corsé, se présentent toute une cohorte de tartes aux myrtilles, questches, mirabelles ou pommes. Sans oublier la très spéciale tarte au fromage ou le très connu Kougelhopf.

Du côté boisson, la région ne vous décevra pas non plus. Les bières sont d'excellente qualité. Mais que dire des vins ! Le choix des blancs demeure complexe. Car une particularité alsacienne fait appeler les crus par le nom des cépages et non pas par leur localité d'origine. Alors parmi le Riesling, le Gewurztraminer, le Muscat, le Tokay, les Pinots (gris, blanc et noir), à vous de sélectionner le cru du terroir qui convient à vos papilles. Mais, de toutes façons, un de ces vins vous plaira, soit par sa fraîcheur, sa franchise, son arôme fruité et bien d'autres qualités.

Les alcools blancs, comme le marc ou la framboise, ne vous décevront pas non plus.

Découvrez le vignoble

Entre Strasbourg et Colmar, vous découvrirez les joyaux de la route du vin, des villages typiquement vignerons, un peu désuets et souvent très fleuris. Si vous n'avez pas le temps de musser trop longtemps, ne manquez surtout pas Riquewihr, un vieux bourg, avec une rue principale tout en pente. Bordée de maisons anciennes, colorées et ornées de cascades de fleurs, cette artère chante le vin et la gastronomie locale. Partout, vous pourrez déguster le cru nouveau, accompagné d'un mets salé ou sucré typiquement alsacien. Vous finirez votre périple à travers un vignoble vallonné pour atteindre Colmar. Réservez votre table à « La Maison des têtes », une bâtisse où des figures sculptées sont alignées sur la façade et où surtout, dans un cadre bourgeois, vous choisirez, sur une riche carte, des plats délectables.

L. W.

27 September 1989

Im Rahmen eines internationalen Symposions des Europarates über Naturkundemuseen und Infozentren besuchten über 80 Teilnehmer aus 17 Ländern das PMN



In Strasbourg endete eine dreitägige Seminarveranstaltung, die als internationales Symposium über Naturkundemuseen und Informationszentren durchgeführt wurde. Die in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Internationalen "Council of Museums" (ICOM) vom Europarat organisierte Veranstaltung befaßte sich mit Aufgaben und Zielen musealer Institutionen als Werkzeuge zur Wissensvermittlung und Zentren der Dokumentation naturkundlicher Themen.

Auf einer Exkursion am 27.9. informierten sich die rund 80 Seminarteilnehmer aus 17 Mitgliedsländern des Europarates über die Naturparks Nordvogesen und Pfälzerwald, insbesondere über Informationszentren und deren grenzüberschreitende Aktivitäten.

Nach der von Dipl.-Biol. Roland van Gysegghem, den Diplom-Forstwirten Werner F. Dexheimer und Arno Weiß sowie zwei Dolmetschern dreisprachig kommentierten Informationsfahrt durch den Naturpark Pfälzerwald wurde das Seminar von Bürgermeister Georg Kalbfuß und dem Museumsbeauftragten der POLLICHIA; Prof.Dr. W. Cappel im PMN begrüßt.

Die Teilnehmer der deutschen Delegation, Museumsdirektor Dr. Wolfgang W. Gettmann sowie die pfälzischen Bezirktagsabgeordneten Dr. Winfried Hirschberger (Kusel) und Josef Krekeler (Pirmasens), stellten "Europa-Projekte" vor. Hierzu gehören das 1985 begründete Filmfestival NATURALE, verschiedene Wanderausstellungen und Fortbildungsveranstaltungen sowie die jüngst eröffnete zweisprachige Sonderausstellung "Nutzpflanzen der Türkei". Zum Ende der Veranstaltung wurde am 29. September 1989 im Europarat von den versammelten Fachleuten eine Resolution verabschiedet, in der die Regierungen der Mitgliedsländer aufgefordert werden, die Arbeit der Naturkundemuseen zu fördern, da die Notwendigkeit, über Umweltthemen zu informieren, rapide zunimmt. Dabei wurde die Berufung dieser Institutionen zur Erfüllung wissenschaftlicher, kultureller und erzieherischer Aufgaben besonders betont und die europaweite Vertiefung der Zusammenarbeit gefordert.

Für Museumsmitarbeiter, POLLICHIA und Haushaltsträger sehr erfreulich war ein Lob, das der Chef der Naturschutzabteilung des Europarates, Dr. Jean-Pierre Ribaut in seinen Dankbrief an den Museumsdirektor eingeschlossen hat:

....Vous avez eu la satisfaction de constater que tous les participants ont hautement apprécié la conception remarquablement exemplaire de votre Musée, dont vous pouvez être légitimement fier.....

...."Sie hatten die Befriedigung festzustellen, daß die bemerkenswert beispielhafte Konzeption Ihres Museums allen Teilnehmern sehr gut gefallen hat, darauf können Sie mit Berechtigung stolz sein"..... (Red.)



Vorstellung des "Weißen Haies" für die deutsche Delegation v.links: U.Heidtke, Paläontologe am PMN, Dr.W.W. Gettmann, Museumsdirektor und die pfälzischen Bezirktagsabgeordneten Dr. W. Hirschberger, J. Krekeler.



Deutsch-französisches Zoologengespräch v.l. Dr.W.W. Gettmann, Direktor des PMN, Dipl.-Biol. R.van Gyseghem, Zoologie-Referent am PMN und Frau Dr. Lang, Direktorin des Naturkundemuseums Straßburg.

Article in the press
at "Bulletin de l'Association des Conservateurs des collections
Publiques de France", mars 1990

Les Musées de la Nature à l'heure de l'Europe

L'engouement pour les musées est un phénomène de société partout sensible. Après d'autres les musées de la nature en bénéficient, particulièrement depuis que montent sous les feux de l'actualité les thèmes et problèmes dont ils ont vocation de parler. Longtemps à l'écart des courants de mode ils se trouvent soudain projetés par la conjoncture au sein d'un des débats majeurs de cette fin de siècle : comment mieux connaître notre environnement ? comment mettre en relief les périls qui le menacent et les mesures envisagées pour y remédier ? comment concevoir enfin une exploitation rationnelle des ressources naturelles ?

La triple vocation de recherche, de protection et d'éducation en matière de nature de ces musées fait d'eux des partenaires tout indiqués pour tous ceux qui ont à mettre en oeuvre une politique d'information dans ce domaine.

De fait on assiste actuellement à une véritable floraison de projets touchant cette capacité qu'ont ces musées de sensibiliser le tissu social à des problèmes dont la solution dépend très largement, à l'évidence, d'une bonne information du plus grand nombre.

Le phénomène est si net et si ample que le Conseil de l'Europe s'y intéresse désormais, lui qui s'est fait une priorité de la protection de l'environnement. Fin septembre 89, il a organisé à Strasbourg, en liaison avec l'ICOM et l'Association des Musées de plein air européens, un séminaire sur les musées de la nature intitulé :

les musées, outils pour la connaissance, la valorisation et la préservation du patrimoine naturel européen.

Pendant trois jours près de 80 spécialistes ont axé leur réflexion sur les thèmes suivants :

- la révolution muséographique et l'ouverture du musée sur le monde extérieur ;
- la reconnaissance de l'utilité sociale du musée ;
- les partenaires du musée ;
- les techniques de la révolution muséologique ;
- un nouveau métier gestionnaire de musée ;
- un nouveau musée, que faire ? déplacer ? rénover ? construire ?

Un compte rendu détaillé de ce séminaire devrait bientôt voir le jour sous l'égide du Conseil de l'Europe qui annonce de nouvelles initiatives dans ce domaine. Toutes devraient viser à assurer, en liaison avec qui de droit, une information et une cohésion accrues de tous ceux qui oeuvrent au profit du patrimoine naturel européen, de sa connaissance, de sa survie, à l'heure où s'ouvre l'Europe.

Robert JULLIEN

Rapporteur du séminaire
Secrétaire du Comité ICOM des
Musées d'Histoire Naturelle

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